



Currently, freshwater is drawn from the Sacramento River in the North Delta and moved southward through a complex maze of channels to huge federal and State pumping plants located in the South Delta. The quality of this water can be degraded along the way due to salinity intrusion from the Bay, inputs from agricultural and municipal discharges, etc. Millions of eggs and larvae of native and introduced fishes can be entrained in the pumping facilities. Also, the 1,100 mile levee system comprising backbone of Delta infrastructure make the State water supply vulnerable because the levees could collapse in the event of an earthquake or flood.

The BDCP calls for the construction of twin tunnels 35-miles long that would draw water directly from the Sacramento River and deliver it to the existing pumping facilities in the South Delta. The State Water Contractors (agricultural and municipal) are willing to pay for the infrastructure as long as they are allowed to build the twin tunnels and increase freshwater diversions by 1 MAF annually (from about 6 to 7 MAF). Costs for the associated restoration of 65,000 acres of wetlands on the periphery of the Delta would be borne by taxpayers.